

COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE

REQUIREMENTS

Students pursuing an undergraduate degree in Letters & Science must complete the University General Education Requirements (GER) (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatetext>) and the following L&S requirements:

L&S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

This page lists the general degree requirements for the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees, Journalism Bachelor of Arts (JBA), and Journalism Bachelor of Science (JBS).

Students must complete at least one L&S major to earn one of these degrees; please consult the Guide pages for the respective L&S majors for information about specific major requirements.

Some L&S degrees have different degree requirements that share some aspects of the requirements described below. Please consult the Guide pages for specific requirements for admission and completion for the Bachelor of Science, Applied Mathematics, Engineering, and Physics, Bachelor of Liberal Studies (online only), Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, Bachelor of Music (in Education and in Performance), and the Bachelor of Social Work.

In L&S programs, courses may apply to more than one requirement category, unless specifically noted otherwise.

FOUNDATIONS: TOOLS FOR LEARNING

For all UW–Madison undergraduates, these learning experiences begin with students satisfying the university's General Education Requirements—usually by taking courses taught within the College of Letters & Science. These common foundations cover key topics which are necessary for any undergraduate major and any prospective career: oral and written communication; mathematical and logical reasoning; and the diversity of cultures within global society.

For more on the General Education Requirements, see Requirements for Undergraduate Study (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatetext>).

Language

The study of a language other than English contributes in an important way to a broad education for today's students, who live in a world where the overwhelming majority of people do not speak or read English and where much of the knowledge that is disseminated may never appear in English. Knowledge of a language other than English is important for an appreciation of the culture of the people using that language, and it also helps students to understand the structure and complexities of their own language. Students with sufficient preparation may be able to use the language for study in their chosen discipline.

To be admitted to the University of Wisconsin–Madison, students must have completed the second-year level of a single language other than English (or American Sign Language) in high school. On rare occasions, students may be admitted with a language deficiency, but they will be

required to make up that deficiency by the time they earn their 60th degree credit, or they will not be allowed to continue.

Language Requirement:

All students working for a B.A. or B.S. degree in the College of Letters & Science must fulfill the language requirement (previously known as the "Foreign Language Requirement").

B.A. Degree

For the **B.A. degree**, the foreign language requirement may be met in one of two ways: (1) completion of the fourth unit (level) in one language, or (2) completion of the third unit (level) in one language **and** completion of the second unit (level) in another language.

B.S. Degree

For the **B.S. degree**, the foreign language requirement may be met by completion of the third level (unit) of a foreign language in high school, or the equivalent third-semester-level college work.

Language Substitution:

The Foreign Language Substitution Package is for degree-seeking candidates in the College of Letters & Science (L&S) only who are seeking to fulfill the L&S foreign language requirements and also have a documented disability in secondary or additional language acquisition in foreign language acquisition. Specifically, the Foreign Language Substitution Package, like the foreign language requirement, provides students with information about language in general as well as the literature and culture of the people using a particular language. Courses used to meet the substitution must be approved by the designated academic dean in L&S Undergraduate Academic Deans' Services (101 Ingraham Hall (<https://saa.ls.wisc.edu/offices/academic-deans-services/>)). Classes used for the substitution package **cannot** be used to fulfill any of the following requirements:

- University General Education Requirements
- L&S Breadth
- Major Requirements

For more detailed information about applying for the substitution package, please see L&S language substitution (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/84515/>).

Mathematics

Mathematics is a principal tool of knowledge. Algebra and geometry provide the minimum of mathematics skills that an educated person needs in today's world, and competence in these areas is required for admission to the university. Since mathematics underlies quantitative work in all sciences, and the level of mathematical background required has been steadily increasing in most areas of science, the L&S math requirements should be viewed as minimums. Students whose placement scores place them in MATH 96 must complete it before enrolling in any Quantitative Reasoning A course.

B.A. Degree

The B.A. requires completion of the University General Education Requirements for Quantitative Reasoning A and Quantitative Reasoning B.

B.S. Degree

The B.S. degree requires two courses of at least three credits (each) at the Intermediate or Advanced level in MATH (<http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/math/>), COMP SCI (http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/comp_sci/), or STAT (<http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/stat/>). Of the two courses, only one (1) course in COMP SCI and

only one (1) course in STAT may count toward the B.S. mathematics requirement.

BREADTH: EXPLORATION IN THE LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Ways of Knowing

At the heart of any degree in the liberal arts and sciences is an active understanding of the variety and breadth of the many scholarly approaches to knowing the world. Every student in the College of Letters & Science experiences significant exposure to three principal fields of knowledge: the arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. These broad fields of knowledge are not the same as the areas of depth that we call "majors." In fact, any particular major—or even a particular course within a major—might well involve more than one of these fields of knowledge. (For example, imagine a seminar on "people and the environment" that combines historical background, research on social patterns of energy use, and scientific understanding of climate.) Working together, each of these three fields of knowledge represents a particular "way of knowing" about the world around us.

Arts and Humanities

Courses in the arts and humanities involve knowing the world through the production and analysis of artistic, literary, and scholarly work. Some courses examine the fine and performing arts, or literature, presenting students with opportunities to interpret and think critically about these creative expressions of the human condition. Other courses help students to understand and compare religious and philosophical conceptions of humankind. Still other courses take on historical subjects, focusing on moments of change and periods of continuity for the peoples and regions of the world. These courses all encourage students to analyze the range of creative and cultural artifacts, expressions, and ideas of human existence—history, literature, art, culture, folklore—and to use that information to better understand humanity and to cultivate civic and social responsibility.

Social Sciences

Courses in the social sciences involve knowing the world through the systematic study of human society, interactions, and institutions. The social sciences explore these issues from a wide range of perspectives and research techniques, both quantitative and qualitative. Through these courses students learn how to formulate research questions and determine what techniques are best used to answer those questions—for example, exploring ideas and developing theories, conducting surveys and building models, or observing and participating in social life itself. Developing such analytical skills assists students as they approach complex problems and seek to solve them in both the workplace and the community.

Natural Sciences

Courses in the natural sciences involve knowing the world through scientific inquiry—assembling objective information that can be used to explain observed natural phenomena in a way that is thorough and verifiable. The natural sciences are often divided into the physical sciences (dealing with matter and energy, or the study of the earth, atmosphere, and oceans) and the biological sciences (dealing with life and living systems, like plants, animals, and environments). These courses often contain laboratory components that allow students to gain firsthand experience in scientific research methods. By completing this requirement, science and non-science majors alike will gain an appreciation for science as a way of systematically looking at the natural world, understanding how this process can be used to inform decision-making in a wide range of political, economic, and social contexts.

Together, these broad "ways of knowing" give students a complementary set of tools for seeing, imagining, and asking questions about the world—tools that enhance creative problem solving no matter what the field. And, because twenty-first-century knowledge is not neatly compartmentalized, it is worth noting that these areas of study intersect and overlap; courses in some areas draw upon strategies used in the others. Experiences in "breadth" courses can be life-changing: we frequently hear that a course taken to fulfill a breadth requirement introduced someone to a subject that became a new major, a new way of looking at a current major, or a lifelong interest. For more information, visit the KnowledgeBase help document (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/page.php?id=27031>).

A liberal education involves not only the nature and kinds of knowledge but also the purpose for which knowledge should be used. These considerations are embodied in the breadth or distribution requirement and call for knowledge in several fields of learning. The purpose of this breadth requirement is to ensure that a degree candidate will obtain an understanding of approaches in the humanities, social sciences, biological sciences, and physical sciences adequate for use both as a citizen and as a specialist.

Breadth Requirements

The L&S breadth requirement is met with 36 credits in the three broad areas of knowledge described above: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Look in the courses section (<http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/>) of the Guide under Course Designation to see what breadth designation courses have.

B.A. Degree

Humanities: Students are required to complete 12 credits in the humanities, 6 of which must be in literature.

Social Sciences: Students are required to complete 12 credits in social sciences.

Natural Sciences: Students are required to complete 12 credits in natural sciences. Students must take at least one 3+ credit course in biological science AND one 3+ credit course in physical science.

The remaining six (6) credits can be any combination of natural, biological, or physical science credits.

B.S. Degree

Humanities: Students are required to complete 12 credits in the humanities, 6 of which must be in literature.

Social Sciences: Students are required to complete 12 credits in social sciences.

Natural Sciences: Students are required to complete 12 credits in natural sciences. Students must complete 6 credits in biological science AND 6 credits in physical science.

DEPTH

Mastery of Intermediate/Advanced Work

Students must complete a minimum of 60 credits in courses with the Intermediate or Advanced level designation. The purpose of this requirement is to encourage students to undertake advanced work to the greatest possible extent and to ensure that they achieve greater sophistication and a deeper mastery of subject matter as they advance through the baccalaureate curriculum.

Understanding a Field of Study (Major)

The process of declaring and completing a major provides students with an opportunity to concentrate on an in-depth investigation of at least one subject or issue, putting their tools for learning and ways of knowing to focused use. This intensive understanding of one topic helps students to appreciate the potential depth of the others. A student's work in the major

reflects a continuing progression of skills, knowledge, and values, where advanced learning opportunities in upper-level coursework grow from and expand upon earlier experiences, helping students build additional depth in writing, speaking, information literacy, and critical thinking skills from the perspective of a particular discipline. In senior capstone or independent research projects, students are frequently asked to synthesize what they have learned and apply it in a variety of new situations. By the conclusion of their studies, students in the major are better able to understand themselves and their society, to develop their intellectual powers outside of a university setting, and to make productive contributions to the world around them. (See list of L&S majors. (p.))

Every candidate for an L&S baccalaureate degree must complete a specified and approved L&S major field of study. Students may elect a department major, a major in a recognized interdisciplinary program, or may develop an individual major if approved by a faculty review committee.

Declaring a Major or Degree

A department, program, or school may specify prerequisites for declaration into a major, such as a minimum grade point average or completion of specific courses with a minimum grade. Students should review the requirements for a particular major or degree program as outlined under the L&S majors (p.) section of the Guide and consult the major advisor for information. Only the department or school can make an exception to declaration requirements. Students not accepted in a major or school must select a different major.

Requirements that Apply to All Majors

Mastery of Upper-Level Work in the Major

All students must complete in residence a minimum of 15 credits of major course work defined as "upper-level" by the major department or program. (Please see the section on Residence Requirements below for additional information about credits taken "in residence.")

Residence Requirement in the Major

All students must complete at least 15 credits in the major, at any level, on campus (not through a UW-Madison study abroad program). This includes courses offered by a UW-Madison instructor in hybrid and online modes of instruction.

TOTAL CREDITS

A minimum of 120 degree credits is required for all baccalaureate degrees granted by the College of Letters & Science. The total credits for the degree encompass the requirements detailed above, but also include elective credits not associated with any specific requirement, that allow students to explore other areas of academic interest. Refer to the information in the Majors and Certificates section of the L&S Guide for information about the minimum degree credits required.

Liberal Arts and Science Credits: 108

Of the minimum 120 credits required for graduation for a B.A. or B.S. degree at least 108 credits must be in courses designated as Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) courses. These courses appear in the Guide as L&S credit and can be identified by looking at the course designation section for a course in the Guide.

Courses that have been approved as Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) classes are expected to encourage students in one or more of the three "habits of the mind" of liberal arts education, as specified by the College of Letters & Science. These include:

- skilled written and verbal communication, excelling in formulating and expressing a point of view; reflecting and questioning current

knowledge through reading; research and consideration of the views of others.

- the ability to draw flexibly upon and apply the modes of thought of the major areas of knowledge.
- knowledge of our basic cultural heritage as a multifaceted and often contested history.

For more information, refer to criteria for Liberal Arts and Science Courses (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/page.php?id=43819>).

RESIDENCE

Residence Requirement in the Degree

All L&S students must earn a minimum of 30 degree credits in residence at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A course is considered in residence if the student enrolls for credit through UW-Madison. This would include any course that is completed:

- at UW-Madison, in any instructional mode (in-person, online, or hybrid)
- through a UW-Madison administered program, either domestically or internationally (i.e., Study Abroad through International Academic Programs)

A course is not in residence when credit is earned through:

- another accredited institution of higher learning
- study abroad credit, if administered by an institution other than UW-Madison
- examination, such Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or other approved exams
- retroactive language credit.

UW-Extension and other campuses in the University of Wisconsin System are different institutions and credit earned at any of these campuses is considered transfer credit and not in residence.

Senior Residence Rule

The 30 minimum credits a student must earn in residence should be completed in the senior year (after a student has completed 86 degree credits). This requirement intends to ensure that the student's depth of study -- which should occur in more advanced-level courses, within the major, with faculty instruction, and in areas of research -- are distinctly UW-Madison experiences. These credits do not have to be contiguous for the requirement to be met.

QUALITY OF WORK

A student's overall quality of work and their quality of work in their chosen major are important measures of a student's mastery of knowledge. The L&S quality of work requirements are all computed on courses taken in residence only, and set a minimum 2.000 GPA in four specific areas:

- **University GPA**, computed using all courses taken for a grade at UW-Madison
- **Mastery of Intermediate/Advanced work in LAS courses**, computed using all graded courses designated as LAS and as either Intermediate or Advanced level
- **Major GPA**, which is computed using all courses in each declared major and all courses in the subject of that major (if applicable)
- **Upper-Level work in the Major**, which is computed using all courses designated as upper-level in each declared major

For the University GPA, all graded courses compute into this grade point average, including courses that are failed and those that were repeated without credit.

For the other three L&S GPA, all graded courses, including courses that are failed, compute into the grade point average, except for non-repeatable courses for which credit has already been earned; these courses are considered be taken on a "refresher basis" and do not calculate into any GPA, except for the University GPA. See Repeat of Courses Not for Credit (p.) in Policies & Regulations for more information.